

OBSERVATION, INCLUDING STRONG OBJECTION, TO THE PROPOSED MUNGMORE WIND FARM

PLEANALA CASE NO PAX.16 324387

OBSERVATION

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VISUAL BLIGHT

The beauty and peace of Erris and it's stunningly clear, uninterrupted views of mountains and sea have always been it's calling card for the visitors and tourists who come solely for this and who provide the area with much of it's income. Until now this landscape has been saved from any scarring developments and high-rise structures, even in the form of hotels, for centuries.

Why there should be a threat of dominant, visibly scarring structures in the form of 13 x 180m tall wind turbines now is utterly impossible to comprehend. To change the unspoilt face of this stunningly pure and clean area of Ireland is madness. Once changed, it can never be restored and the attraction for the vital influx of tourists who travel from all over the world to walk, climb, cycle and swim in this unspoilt beauty will never be the same.

The views of mountains from Doolough will be utterly ruined, the views from Blacksod and Cairn Links looking to Mungmore will be ruined...in fact it seems that wherever you go in a 25km radius the views will be dominated by the unnatural sight of these turbines. It is just simply not the place for them.

THREAT TO NATURE/HEALTH

There is strong evidence of permanent and lasting damage to soil and plantlife once you dig and install massive concrete plinths as deep as is necessary to plant a 180m tall turbine and there are 13 of them proposed! This is an unacceptable scale in such a small area. Aside from the turbines the attached support development will be a hellish concrete industrial facility completely out of place in this spot.

The protected blanket bogland's delicate chemical balance would also be altered. These bogs are millions of years old! Why choose such a vulnerable site when you can put them off shore or on the edge of a headland where there is no bog or any houses?

There is also strong evidence that birdlife will be destroyed or in danger from blades, noise and flicker. These structures and the unseen electro magnetic waves can also disrupt their flight paths, breeding/nesting habits and general behaviour. Again, if the proposed turbines are built the risk to a permeant loss of wildlife is too great.

The same applies to livestock/animals living and grazing in the area - the constant noise and flicker of the turbines will create an unpleasant continuous environment tantamount to animal cruelty.

The amount of traffic on the small road between Glencastle and Castlebar will increase beyond belief , not only in the years of construction but going forward, for the huge amount of employees. More importantly, for all families living in the Erris their daily lives will change beyond measure, without any chance to object. The planning process is not allowing complaints, per se, and this *observation* is costing each person 50 euros. This seems an intentional way of discouraging low income locals of having their right to object and be heard.

They have not asked for their houses to be devalued, for their views to be ruined, their health, peace and wellbeing being disturbed, potentially 24/7, if similar case studies are to be believed on the effects of noise and light flicker on residents' mental health.

Aside from the damaging aspects to tax paying residents health and finances, these residents and their ancestors have been in the Erris area for hundreds of years, if not thousands. Why should one large non Irish company suddenly be allowed to come into that place and destroy everything that makes it what it is? It is totally unacceptable and unwise on every level and the local and central governments may experience legal recourse from residents if they proceed.

There are other sites to be explored on the edges of coasts or offshore without any houses nearby and without the main access being one vital community road which will now change from an idyllic peaceful drive to a traffic heavy and dangerous highway.

HERITAGE AND HISTORY

The Republic Ireland has had it's independence for only a little more than 100 years. Millions had to leave Ireland a hundred years before that to save their families and try to survive in other places. Fifty or sixty years ago thousands more left due to the lack of employment and opportunity. Now it seems that rather than celebrating Ireland as a growing, independent, autonomous state and continuing to build a strong country that provides for its people and protects its natural resources the Irish government chooses to sell off land and financial opportunities to the highest bidder - on this occasion RWE, and in recent years Shell Oil!

Mount Jubilee, located only a few km away is a heritage site, revered by Catholic pilgrims but also is a more ancient site which demands a deeper respect from supposedly educated council and government officials. This needs to be taken into account.

The proposed Muingmore Windfarm may indeed provide a few jobs for locals and this may be a reason to silence some objections but we must look at the larger opportunity being lost here - RWE is a German company and not an Irish state-owned endeavour whereby the Irish population will be given shares, revenue or cheaper energy. Its is purely a commercial endeavour whereby a large corporation is coming into a small community to snap up land cheaply and make millions/billions, possibly purely to power data centres. It is being marketed as an "eco friendly, positive change" that will lower energy prices. In reality it is going to create a huge profit for a non Irish organisation whilst making Erris an inhospitable, unhealthy and unpleasant place to live. Its peace and beauty were once all north Mayo had, in harder times, before lives were rebuilt after the famine and then the civil war of independence.

Now the government are proposing, in stages, to take that vital asset away from Mayo - it's unspoiled beauty. As the daughter of Mary Ruddy, who was born in Loughnahelly, Erris in 1925, and with a large extended family in the area, all of whom will be affected by this terrifying proposal, I feel it's important to add my voice to the case against the wind farm.

Please, please rethink this plan and the proposed site before it's too late.

Yours Sincerely
Geraldine Geraghty c/o Rose of the Sea, Belmullet, Erris.